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as he removes successfully a gall-bladder filled with stones from a patient whose diagnosis he had made as cholelithiasis.

Happy is the operating nurse who receives from the surgeon an occasional word of praise, well-earned.

Finally comes graduation. On this night each senior appears in uniform with a wide black band on her cap and for one short evening is elated over the idea of being a graduate. Relations and friends are invited and the medical staff of the hospital. She listens to an address by some famous speaker and enjoys thoroughly the dancing which follows. Alas, this heaven is but for an evening! The next morning, she pockets her black band and as a pupil-nurse again goes on to complete her ten hundred and fifty-three days of duty.

It is plain to her now, as she looks back over her three years, why other nurses tried to dissuade her from entering, although they, themselves, claimed they loved the work. She is glad she did not take their advice. The many-sidedness of her training has furnished her a broad and firm foundation upon which to build her work in the world.

Even if, to the outsider, her uniform and black band present no other impression than that of an attractive costume, to those who understand, and to her, it represents knowledge and friendships which could be acquired in no other way.

## PARASITES

By MARY CAROLINE TIBBITS

*New York, N. Y.*

Funk and Wagnall's dictionary defines parasite as "a living organism, either an animal or plant, that lives on or in some other organism from which it derives its nourishment for the whole or part of its existence."

Webster's *International*, defining "parasite" from a biological standpoint says, "a plant or animal living in, on or with some other living organism, at whose expense it obtains its food, shelter or some other advantage. Among animals the term commonly designates those living on other animals. Some are parasites throughout life, many others only during certain stages."

From the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* we learn that the term as applied to men originally conveyed no idea of reproach. In fact, a parasite was a person performing work peculiar to himself and of use either to the church or to the community. However, our modern conception of parasite seems to have signally changed, until we now seem naturally

to think of a human parasite as a person who is ever ready to live by the exertions of others, or at least derive as much from others as he can, without giving anything in return.

For convenience, let us in our minds roughly divide the human parasite into two classes: the physically strong parasite, who walks the streets in the garb of a gentleman, while doing nothing either for himself nor for the betterment of human society; and his brother the pauper parasite, who is ever waiting to find his physical needs supplied for him by the exertions of others; one who is ever ready to accept aid either municipal or philanthropic and never substantially betters his own condition nor that of society. Failing as they both do to put their shoulders to the wheel, the impetus for the wheel of life misses just that much. Yet, both go on living and their living conditions are improved because others are making exertions and are being active in life. Because a band of people come together and enforce a pure food law, he, the parasite, will eat purer food. Because a band of people get together and have some unsanitary buildings condemned or bad plumbing pulled out and replaced by properly trapped and vented toilets, baths, etc., he profits by this condition. The pauper parasite would probably tell you that he "doesn't give a hang about such stuff;" the place suited him as it was, but you and I who well know the evils of poor plumbing, know very well that it is right and necessary that a band of people should get together and demand sanitary conditions which shall be better for all, including our parasites. Thus his lodging house is more sanitary than it would have been had it existed, shall we say, thirty years ago.

His food, poor as it may be, has probably originally been of a standard in compliance with pure food laws and therefore the chances are that it is better, if only in a small degree, than it would otherwise have been. He may not see the use of our work in these lines, but whether he cares or not, he becomes a sharer in the benefits accruing from the efforts of others. Now what do we see in this? Is he a parasite merely because he asks bread and lodging at the hands of his fellow men? What verdict are we going to render in our minds regarding his relations to the welfare of society? Let us ponder on this attitude of indifference of his for a few minutes and when we are through sitting in judgment upon our brother parasite, may we not give a few serious moments of quiet thought in examining our professional consciences from the same view-point that we are now judging him from as a social parasite? Let us for a few moments be deliberately and calmly introspective. Let us turn a broad search-light upon ourselves and our socialistic and legislative activities from a professional view-point,

and with the aid of an impartial mind as umpire, may we not ask ourselves what we are doing for the betterment of society in general and for ourselves collectively? What laws are we helping to frame and push through Congress? I put the question to myself. "None," says my political conscience. "But then," I argue, "I have not the gift of statesmanship; others are clever at that but I cannot stand up and make a well-rounded speech as can my friend. I admire her, but as for me, I cannot even make a poor attempt at it." "No, of course I never have had the courage to try, but then I just know I can't." "Now, then," says my political-social-conscience, "you have put me to work and I propose to be unrelenting. You, who are on witness to yourself, you, who do not wish to be a self-condemned parasite, answer me these questions. Are you a member of your county association? Do you take a lively interest in your state association meetings? Since you tell me you cannot make public speeches, let me tell you that speech making is not the beginning and ending of legislative work, almost it is a lesser part. Are you cheerfully ready to accept work assigned you, to act on simple committees where no speech-making in public is required? Will you do a little clerical work? A little canvassing for signatures to the bill? Are you prompt in paying your dues? If you have not the courage to speak at meetings, do you, at least, attend them regularly and so lend moral support by your presence? Do you seriously realize that every name (and that includes yours) on your state association enrollment counts because there is strength in numbers? Do you realize that it is important that your dues be paid regularly?"

I shut my eyes and put fingers in my ears. I don't want to hear any more questions. "No, I am not a member of the county association. I pay my dues to the state, but I am a busy person; I have family expenses; let Miss —— do it; she is better qualified and any way, I don't bel——" "Stop," says my monitor, "you are answering questions I have not asked, and I still have a few important ones to put to you, for I have more faith in you than you have in yourself. Are you, as a real woman, earnestly striving to rise above any petty jealousy which you may feel for some of your energetic colleagues? You acknowledge yourself that you cannot frame laws and make speeches, but will you not say just a few words to your next-door neighbor regarding the bill which your state hopes to present at the next session of the legislature? That neighbor may have a husband or a brother who is a voting man. He may have influence directly or indirectly with politicians, whose help your state association will need. Yes, really you are surprised to hear it, but your casual conversation

may have quite as much influence in aiding that bill through Congress as the well-rounded speech which your friend is going to make on the day that your bill is given a hearing."

"One more thought," says conscience, "and I leave you to your own quiet reflection. When I first began to question you, you were on pins and needles to tell me the names of some of your acquaintances who you were quite sure could well be classed as parasites. Don't do it, nor don't accuse them of being such. That would be to give offense. Moreover, you are only judging yourself, not them. But now let me give you my final question, you, who cannot frame laws. Will you go to these nurses whom you were just ready to call parasites and in an altogether friendly way, persuade them to join the forces of those working for better conditions within the profession? Explain to them as best you can, how much the county and state associations need them and need every nurse. Show them that there is strength in numbers, that a large enrollment lends dignity in the eyes of legislators. These nurses may try to put you off with excuses or even jibes, but be cheerfully persistent. Don't for one moment suggest that *they* are parasites. They don't know it and you don't want them to know it. Present to them in a simple, comprehensive way, the fact that they are needed. Show them that although they are under heavy financial expenses, it is a matter of good business for them to be co-operating with the county and state associations. With faith in yourself and in them, keep at them. Win them over. In this way, you will be doing quite as valuable a service as she who can face a room full of men, while arguing in favor of a bill."

## STATE BOARD EXAMINATIONS; WHAT THEY SHOULD EMBODY<sup>1</sup>

By ETHEL P. CLARKE, R.N.

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The subject of questioning is receiving considerable attention from those who are doing thoughtful and progressive work in education. Its purpose and importance are being recognized, and authorities generally agree that there are certain qualities every good question should possess: it should compel reflection; it should not be ambiguous; it should not contain the answer; it should be within the experience of the student.

<sup>1</sup> Written for the eighteenth annual convention of the American Nurses' Association (board of examiners session).